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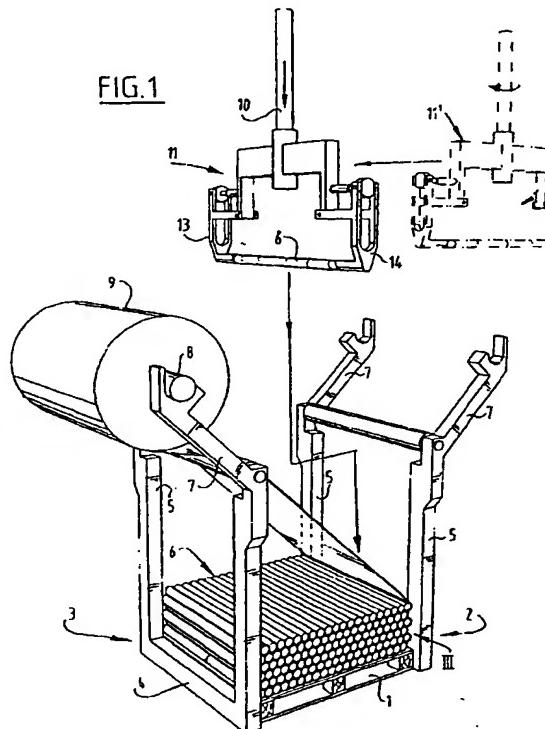
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(54) Apparatus for palletising substantially cylindrical objects

(57) The invention relates to an apparatus for palletising substantially cylindrical objects (6), comprising:

- position-defining means for at least one pallet (1);
- supply means for the objects for palletising;
- at least one holder (8) for a roll of paper (9) intended for arrangement between the palletised objects; and
- a handling device (11) for removing the rolls of can lids from the supply means and placing thereof on the pallet, wherein the apparatus comprises at least two supports arranged on either side of the position-defining means for the pallet, and wherein the handling device is adapted to place the holder for a roll of paper on another support once a number of objects for palletising have been placed on the pallet.



Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an apparatus for palletising substantially cylindrical objects, comprising:

- position-defining means for at least one pallet; and
- a handling device for placing the rolls of can lids on the pallet.

[0002] Such an apparatus is generally known.

[0003] This known apparatus makes use of a complicated device for handling the support for the rolls of paper as well as for the objects for palletising. Use is always made of different handling devices.

[0004] This results in a complicated embodiment of such a handling device, while the control thereof is also complicated.

[0005] The object of the present invention is to prevent these problems associated with the prior art.

[0006] This objective is achieved in that the handling device is adapted to handle position-defining means for the cylindrical objects.

[0007] As a result of these measures it is easy for the robot generally applied in such devices to perform the diverse operations sequentially; it can after all make use of the support for placing of the holders.

[0008] The sequence applied herein comprises of placing onto a pallet the strip of paper or foil unwound from the holder; subsequently placing a number of cylindrical objects on this strip of paper, whereafter the holder for the paper can be moved to the support arranged on the other side of the pallet. It is then possible to continue with arranging of the cylindrical objects until the holder is displaced again.

[0009] The essential point is to protect the outer objects of a layer against becoming detached from the stack, particularly when this last object is not supported by two other objects but only by one other object.

[0010] With this configuration it is possible to maintain the full width of the layers of stacked objects as the height increases.

[0011] It will be apparent that diverse winding patterns can be applied. It is particularly important here that the objects arranged at the sides be wrapped.

[0012] It is even possible to apply wrapping paper which has a width smaller than or equal to half the length of the objects, wherein for each of the rows of objects on the pallet at least two rolls of wrapping paper are arranged which can each be placed independently of each other on the holders. This provides an additional option of using wrapping patterns, whereby the layers of objects stacked on the pallet are better secured.

[0013] According to another preferred embodiment the length of the objects is less than the width of the pallet and the apparatus is adapted to place the objects in at least two rows adjacently of each other on the pallet. This embodiment provides the option of placing

shorter objects, while there is also the possibility of fixing each of the series of objects mutually adjacently in another pattern by means of paper strips.

[0014] According to a particular preferred embodiment the apparatus is adapted to handle stacks of can lids combined into a unit.

[0015] Can lids are objects which must be transported in great volumes from the factory location to the location where they are fixed for instance as a base to a can or to a location where the filled can must be closed with a lid. For easy handling such can lids are packed in stacks and said stacks are palletised. The present invention is particularly applicable in such situations.

[0016] The invention also relates to a method for palletising substantially cylindrical objects, comprising the following steps of:

- carrying onto a pallet an unwound end of a strip of paper wound onto a roll;
- placing a number of objects on the pallet onto the unwound end of the paper strip;
- carrying the roll of paper from a support placed on one side of the pallet to a support placed on the other side of the pallet; and
- repeating the latter stated steps until the pallet is loaded,

wherein the operations are performed by the same handling device.

[0017] It is pointed out here that the invention is not only relevant for this application; other cylindrical objects, and not necessarily circular cylindrical objects, can also be fixed on a pallet in this way.

[0018] The present invention will be elucidated hereinbelow with reference to the annexed drawings, in which:

- figure 1 shows a perspective view of an apparatus according to the invention when the roll of paper is placed on a first holder;
- figure 2 shows a view corresponding with figure 1 wherein the roll of paper is placed on the second holder;
- figure 3 shows a detail view of figure 1; and
- figure 4 shows a detail view of figure 2.

[0019] Figure 1 shows a pallet 1 placed between two U-shaped frames 2 respectively 3. The bottom horizontal member 4 of both U-shaped frames defines the position of pallet 1. Two sides are herein left clear to enable picking up of the filled pallet with a fork-lift truck.

[0020] The posts 5 of each of the U-shaped frames 2,3 ensure that products 6 stacked on pallet 1 are fixed during stacking. It is also possible to make use of open or closed side walls instead of U-shaped frames.

[0021] A support clamp 7 is further arranged on the top of each of the posts 5. Support clamps 7 form together in pairs one support. A holder in the form of a

shaft 8 can be placed in each of the two thus formed supports for the purpose of holding a roll of wrapping paper.

[0022] It will be apparent that instead of paper other products can be used, such as plastic foil, metal foil and so on. In addition, fabrics can be used such as textile fabrics or synthetic fabrics or nets.

[0023] For arranging of products 6 use is made of a robot arm 10 on which is mounted a handling device 11. This latter comprises a frame 12 to which are fixed two rods 13,14 for picking up and setting down products 6. Although here only one particular configuration of robot is shown, it will be apparent that numerous variations hereof are possible.

[0024] This robot arm is further also suitable for placing a shaft 8 for the roll of paper 9 from the one support to the other support. Figure 1 herein shows how paper roll holder 8 is placed on the left-hand support 7, while figure 2 shows how shaft 8 is placed on the right-hand support 7.

[0025] Figures 3 and 4 further show in more detail how the configuration of the stacked roll products 6 and the paper layer 9 is formed. It will be apparent that it is possible to apply numerous other configurations instead of this configuration.

[0026] It is also possible for the stacks of can lids to be placed unpacked on pallets. The term "cylindrical objects" then relates to the lids per se. The handling means, in this case the robot, are then suitable for handling stacked cylindrical objects. In order to prevent the stacks falling apart at their head ends, holding means must be used, for instance in the form of "trays". After completion of a layer with rows of can lids an empty tray is placed, likewise by the robot, which is then filled by the robot.

[0027] It will further be apparent that diverse modifications can be made without departing from the invention.

Claims

1. Apparatus for palletising substantially cylindrical objects, comprising:

- position-defining means for at least one pallet; and
- a handling device for placing the rolls of can lids on the pallet,

characterized in that the handling device is adapted to handle position-defining means for the cylindrical objects.

2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that**

- the position-defining means are formed by at

least one holder for a roll of paper intended for arrangement between the palletised objects,

- the apparatus comprises at least two supports arranged on either side of the position-defining means for the pallet, and
- the handling device is adapted to place the holder for a roll of paper on another support once a number of objects for palletising have been placed on the pallet.

3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 2, **characterized in that**

- the wrapping paper has a width smaller than or equal to half the length of the objects,
- for each of the rows of objects on the pallet at least two rolls of wrapping paper are provided which can each be placed independently of each other on the holders.

4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 or 3, **characterized in that** the length of the objects is smaller than the width of the pallet and the apparatus is adapted to place the objects in at least two rows adjacently of each other on the pallet.

5. Apparatus as claimed in any of the claims 2-4, **characterized in that** the apparatus is adapted to place a holder on another support after placing of a first object forming part of a layer.

6. Apparatus as claimed in any of the claims 2-5, **characterized in that** the apparatus is adapted for layer-wise placing of the objects.

7. Apparatus as claimed in any of the claims 2-6, **characterized in that** the apparatus is adapted to handle stacks of can lids combined into a unit.

8. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the position-defining means are formed by trays and that the handling means are adapted to place a tray after the placing of a number of stacks of can lids.

9. Method for palletising substantially cylindrical objects, comprising the following steps:

- carrying onto a pallet an unwound end of a strip of paper wound onto a roll;
- placing a number of objects on the pallet onto the unwound end of the paper strip;
- carrying the roll of paper from a support placed on one side of the pallet to a support placed on the other side of the pallet; and
- repeating said latter steps until the pallet is loaded,

characterized in that the operations are performed by the same handling device.

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FIG. 1

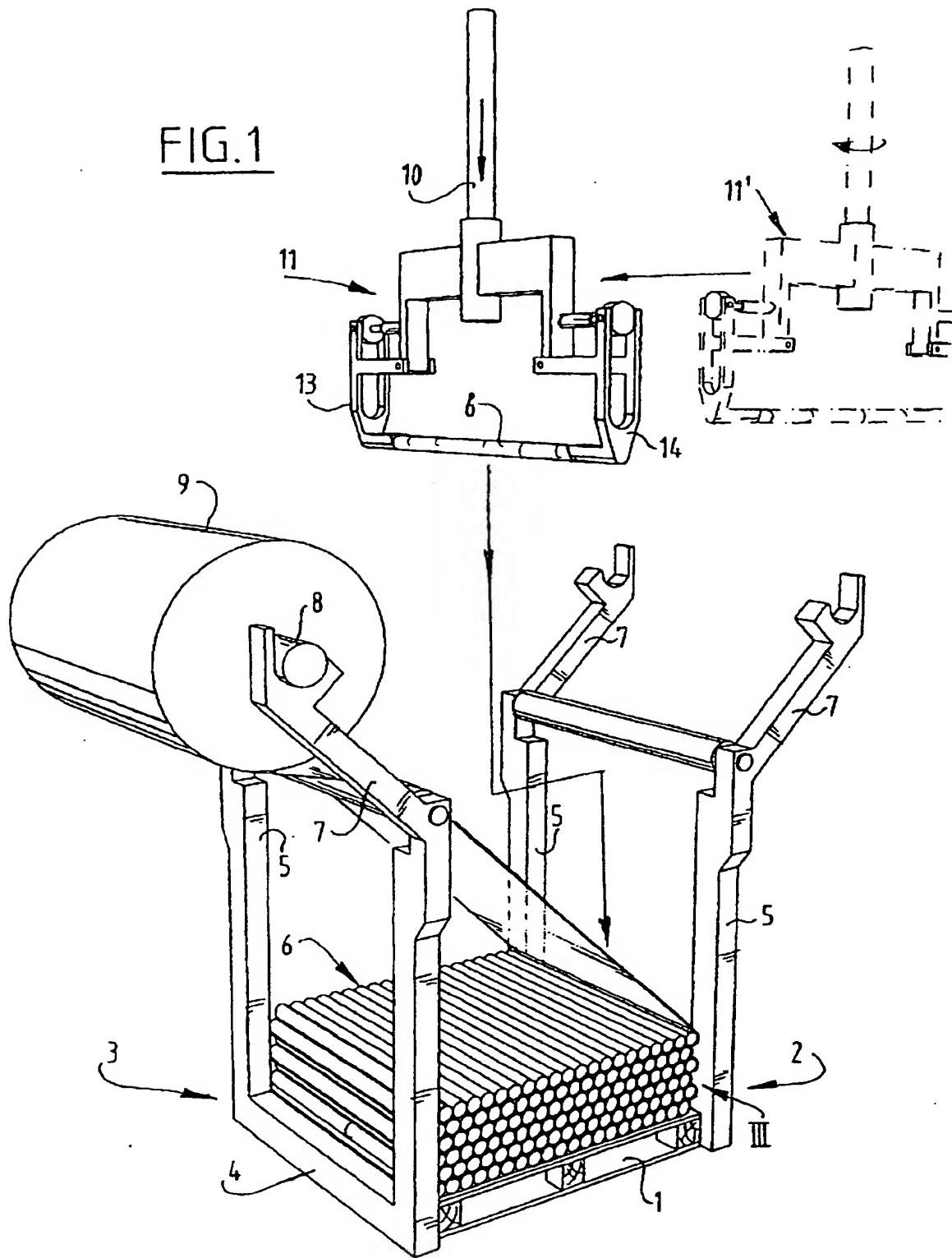
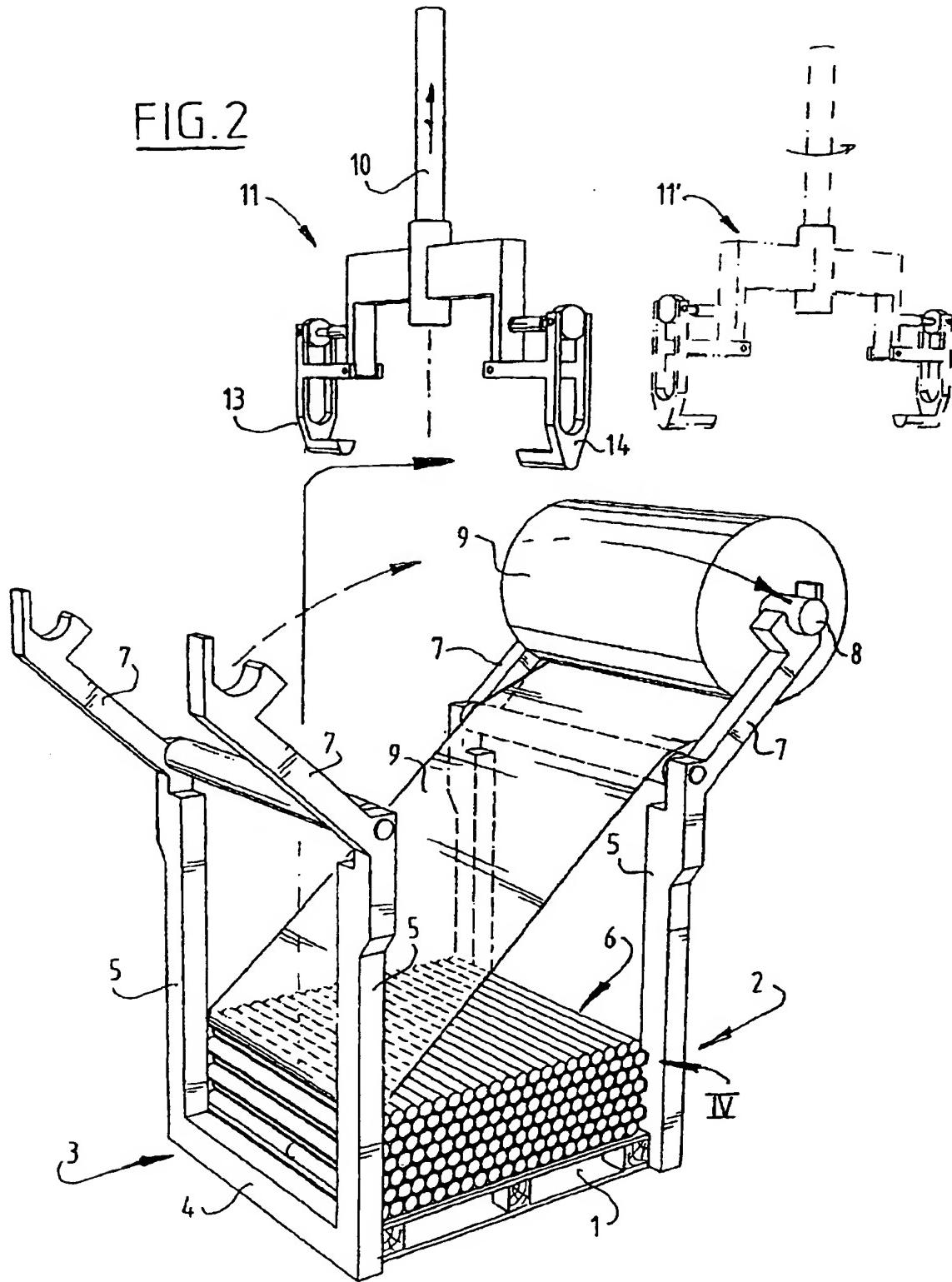
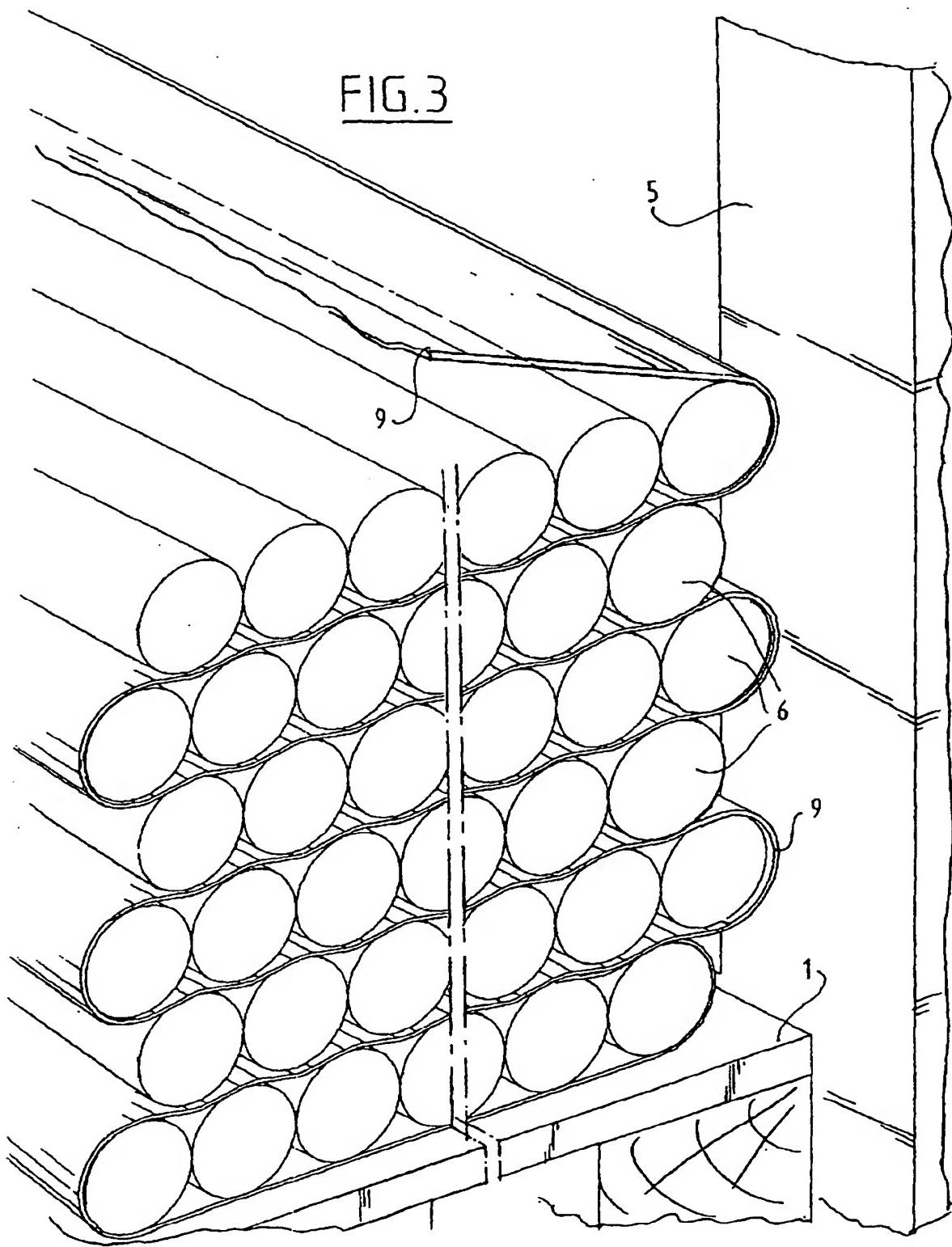
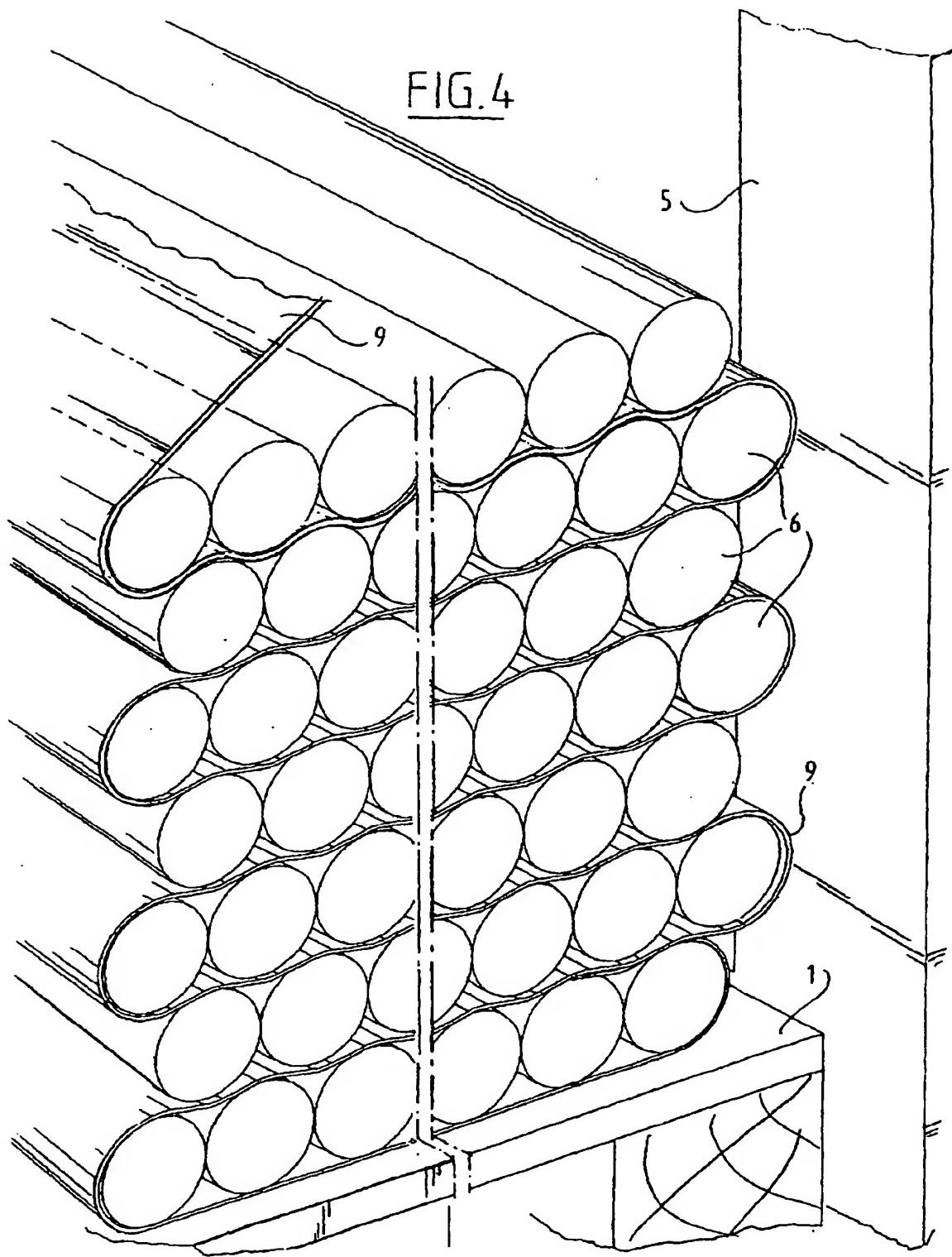


FIG.2







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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

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TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.)					
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims					
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner			
THE HAGUE	13 March 2000	Claeys, H			
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS					
X : particularly relevant if taken alone	T : theory or principle underlying the invention				
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 99 20 4243

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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